

Chelsea Taylor

Appropriation Committee Hearing

02 February 2023

Good evening, Representative Walker, Senator Osten, and other members of the Appropriation Committee.

My name is ChelseaLynn Taylor, and I am a native of Norwich, CT. I am a full-time student of Three Rivers Community College that benefits from the PACT program as well as the other awesome support and resources that Three Rivers has put in place. I was presented with this opportunity to speak by my lovely boss and the Director of Admissions at Three Rivers Community College, Michelle Mason, and I would just like to thank her and Alexa Shelton for providing me with the ability to share my story with such people such as yourselves- figures who are crucial in the budget planning process, who essentially control whether Three Rivers may have the same resources going into a new year.

I would like to remind the committee, or inform those who are unaware, Norwich is not a rich city. I grew up on Broadway, directly up the hill from City Hall, and my family struggled around the poverty line and below my entire adolescent life. Evidently, I have no college fund. It is no thanks to this blinding knowledge of our lack of wealth that years ago originally led me to make the decision that I would not pursue college. However, despite this original thought, I still decided to attend an application event at the Norwich Free Academy. In that session, I pondered how I would even afford classes, when I heard whispers of hope about the PACT program. All of us in that room qualified for the PACT program. Ironically in retrospect, I do not pay for my courses using PACT, but just knowledge of it was enough to get me to register for courses. Within the first semester of being in classes, I joined and became treasurer of two clubs, got a job in the Admissions department, and met probably at least a third of the students currently attending Three Rivers in-person. It is safe for everyone to assume that I saw plenty of how the money allotted to TRCC is used, and while some of it may seem over-the-top to outsiders, I have seen some of the most upset and hardened students become some of the most active and upbeat. I

have seen our Student Programs Office uplift students in the utmost ways, and I have seen students in awful financial distress get fantastic help. I believe our money is being used in the most physically beneficial ways possible.

While it may sound like impersonal rambling, I just wanted to share with the committee that the funding CSCU (Connecticut State Colleges & Universities) needs has thus far been delegated in fantastic ways. I went from not caring whether I received a college education to preaching how Three Rivers has been one of the most valuable resources in my educational and career journey. I thank everyone on this committee for hearing me and other students like me. I hope that everyone here can also hear through me the countless voices of the poverty-ridden families that depend on the resources this allotment has provided the funding for in the past and must continue to provide for in the future. Thank you, and may you consider my testimony as you cast your votes regarding the full and necessary amount to continue to uplift Connecticut's secondary education.